

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action mailed September 28, 2006. Claim 14 has been amended. Claims 38-69 are withdrawn. Claims 1-37 remain pending.

Election/Restrictions

Applicants continue to believe that searching claims 1-69 would not place undue burden on the Examiner but have nevertheless withdrawn claims 38-69 (Group II) and elected claims 1-37 (Group I) for prosecution.

Claim Objections

The Office Action has rejected claim 14 because of the use of the word “alkylate”. Applicants have amended claim 14 to call out an alkylsulfonate. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this objection be withdrawn.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102/§103(a)

Van den Brom et al. (US 5719111)

The Office Action has rejected claims 1-9, 11, 13, 15-17, 21, 22, and 27-37 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by, or in the alternative under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Van den Brom et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants invention is directed to a solid binding agent that forms from a combination of methylglycinediacetic acid (MGDA) and water. Van den Brom et al. does not disclose or render this feature obvious.

Van den Brom et al. is directed to a compressed, granular detergent block and a method of making such a block by (1) granulating a material and then (2) compressing the granular material under a pressure of 3-30 kN/cm². See Van den Brom et al. abstract, and column 2 – Definition of the Invention. Van den Brom et al. teaches that the granular material is preferably

dry. Specifically, Van den Brom et al. states that the granulation step is preferably carried out by dry-mixing the builder or by forming a slurry and then spray-drying the slurry. See column 3 lines 15-27. In fact, Van den Brom et al. goes so far as to state that “the compactibility of the particulate mixture used for preparing the detergent block of the invention could be improved by applying the above described drying step.” See id. When compacting the granular material, the material is compressed under pressure and preferably compressed more than once to improve block density and quality. See column 3 lines 59-67. Finally, Van den Brom et al. distinguishes the compressed solids from cast solids that solidify as the result of hydration of the salts in the composition. See column 1, lines 44-55. The statement directly teaches away from the present invention.

The present invention uses MGDA *and water* for form a solid binding agent. While Van den Brom et al. teaches MGDA as a builder, it does not teach or render obvious the fact that MGDA and water can be used as a binding agent for a solid material. Again, Van den Brom et al. teaches away from solidification by hydration in column 1 and uses pressure on a *dry* granular material to form the solid.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

EP0882786

The Office Action has rejected claims 1-25 and 31 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by, or in the alternative under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over EP 0882786. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

EP 0882786 is directed to a *powdered* detergent composition and includes MGDA in the composition. However, EP 0882786 does not disclose or render obvious the use of MGDA and water to form a binding agent to make a *solid* composition. Powdered composition are flowable

and therefore inherently do not include water other than water molecules associated with the raw materials. Therefore, Van den Brom et al. does not teach the elements of the present invention or render them obvious. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

Williams (US 6162259)

The Office Action has rejected claims 1-37 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Williams. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Williams is directed to a detergent that includes MGDA to aid in dissolution of a product and therefore help in preventing deposit formation. Williams does not teach that MGDA and water form a binding agent for making a solid product. Therefore, Williams does not include the elements of the present invention or render them obvious. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

Summary

It is respectfully submitted that each of the pending claims is in condition for allowance, and notification to that effect is kindly requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' primary attorney-of-record, Anneliese S. Mayer, at (651) 795-5661, if it is believed that prosecution of this application may be assisted thereby.

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Respectfully submitted,

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